

## Special Prophecy Update “Encourage One Another” 1 Thessalonians 4:16-5:11 – June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2017

- We're going to do something a little bit different today after having just completed our study through the book of 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians.
- Because I won't be here next Sunday, I didn't want to start in the book of Galatians so I want to do a special prophecy update.
- As such I've titled today's update, “Encourage One Another” and I would like to have you turn in your Bibles to 1 Thessalonians.

1 Thessalonians 4:16–5:11 (NKJV) — **4:16** For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words. **5:1** But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. 2 For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. 3 For when they say, “Peace and safety!” then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. 4 But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. 5 You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. 6 Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober. 7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. 8 But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation. 9 For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. 11 Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.

- One of the things the Lord has been ministering to me over the last several months is that many today are very discouraged.
- This was clearly the case for the Thessalonian Christians and their discouragement had to do with Christ's return in the rapture.
- It's for this reason that Paul writes them by the Holy Spirit to encourage them especially concerning loved ones who had died.

- It's interesting to note that Paul is not only encouraging them but wanting for them to encourage one another with these words.
- Namely, the words of hope and comfort in the soon return of the Lord, which the Apostle Paul himself anticipated in his lifetime.
- I would suggest that this anticipation was what enabled Paul to endure all the trials and tribulations he went through in his life.

Romans 8:18 - For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

Acts 20:22–24 (NKJV) — 22 And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, 23 except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me. 24 But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

2 Timothy 4:7–8 (NKJV) — 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

- Lest one think the great Apostle lived his life untouched by fear and discouragement, let me hasten to say this was his daily lot.
- In Acts 18:9-10, Paul is so full of fear that the Lord reveals Himself to him in a vision one night and tells him; “do not be afraid.”
- In 2 Corinthians 1:8 Paul says he was burdened beyond measure and above strength, so much so, he despaired even of life.

- If you were to ask me what I thought was one of the greatest needs in the church today, it would be hope and encouragement.
- What I'm finding is that people today are losing hope and becoming weary and discouraged under the stress of their daily lives.
- This because, the times are becoming increasingly more perilous in this, the last days of human history, as we near the end.

2 Timothy 3:1–5 (NKJV) — 1 But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: 2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, 4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!

- I would submit that we are in these perilous times, and I'm personally of the belief that it's going to get worse in the days ahead.
- I think of those suffering in a difficult marriage or worse yet, those who are on the receiving end of an unwanted painful divorce.
- Then there's the single parent who is just hanging on by a thread trying to raise their children while working to make ends meet.

- I think of the broken people with broken relationships estranged from their prodigal children who continue to break their hearts.
- I think of the hopelessness of those who turn to an alcohol or pill bottle seeking to numb their pain, only to end up in bondage.
- I also think of those in the military who serve our country for both a long time and a long way from their home and their family.

- Then the mental and physical anguish on the part of those who lie on a bed of sickness after receiving a devastating diagnosis.
- I think of their caregivers whose lives will never be the same as they give their lives so selflessly to care for their loved ones.
- Then there are those who are grieving the death of a loved one, and it seems like there is no end to their pain and the agony.

- Sadly, all of this can lead to depression in the physical realm and as such the spiritual realm because they are both connected.
- The reason being is that we can become so weary and exhausted that a physical fatigue and spiritual depression then ensues.

In his book, "Spiritual Depression - Its Causes and Its Cure," D. Martyn Lloyd Jones writes, "There are certain physical ailments, which tend to promote depression. ...take that great preacher who preached in London for nearly forty years ... – Charles Haddon Spurgeon – one of the truly great preachers of all time. That great man was subject to spiritual depression, and the main explanation in his case was undoubtedly the fact that he suffered from a gouty condition, which finally killed him. He had to face this problem of spiritual depression often in a most acute form. ...there are many, I find, who come to talk to me about these matters, in whose case it seems quite clear to them that the cause of the trouble is mainly physical. Into this group, speaking generally, you can put tiredness, overstrain, and any form of illness. You cannot isolate the spiritual from the physical for we are body, mind and spirit. The greatest and the best Christians when they are physically weak are more prone to an attack of spiritual depression than at any other time and there are great illustrations of this in the Scriptures. You may be in this condition simply because you are working too hard physically. You can be tired in the work and not tired of the work. It is possible that a man has been over-working- I do not care in what realm, whether natural or spiritual-and has been over-taxing his energy and his physical resources. If you go on working too hard or under strain you are bound to suffer. And of course if that is the cause of the trouble, the remedy you need is medical treatment. There is a striking example of this in the Old Testament. ...when Elijah had that attack of spiritual depression after his heroic effort on Mount Carmel, he sat down under a juniper tree and felt sorry for himself. But the real thing he needed was sleep and food; and God gave him both! He gave him food and rest before He gave him spiritual help."

- Here's where I'm going with all of this, if there was ever a time for us to be encouraged and encourage one another, it is now!  
- The question becomes how? I want to suggest three ways that we can do this, the first of which is, be a paramedic not a police.  
- I'll explain this by way of an illustration Pastor Chuck used many years ago about what happens at the scene of an accident.

- When the police arrive on the scene their purpose is to assess who was in the wrong, in their investigation of the accident.  
- Conversely, when the paramedics arrive, they are there only to minister to those who were injured and get them to the hospital.  
- The point being is that we have way too many police in the body of Christ and not enough paramedics to minister to the hurting.

- The second way to encourage others is to simply pray for one another and perhaps more importantly pray with one another.  
- The problem is prayer has become the lost jewel in the church today. Instead of praying with people, we gossip about people.  
- Perhaps we need look no further than this as to why it is that the church today is so inconsequential, and riddled with defeat.

E.M. Bounds, in his book "Possibilities of Prayer" wrote, "Defeat awaits a non-praying church. Success is sure to follow a church given to much prayer. The supernatural element in the church, without which it must fail, comes only through prayer".

- This brings us to the third way we can encourage one another and it's that of talking with others about the Lord's soon return.  
- It's very encouraging when you have heaven to look forward to; it makes whatever you're going through easier to get through.  
- However, this can actually create the very thing that causes us to be discouraged, such that, the Lord can't come soon enough.

- Kindly allow me to share a thought with you in this regard in the remaining time that we have together today in God's Word.  
- The Lord has given to us His Word that no matter how difficult and painful the trial is that we are in; He will get us through it.  
- Replete throughout the pages of Holy Writ are promise after promise of God's goodness prior to heaven in the land of the living.

Psalm 27:13-14 (NKJV) — 13 I would have lost heart, unless I had believed That I would see the goodness of the LORD In the land of the living. 14 Wait on the LORD; Be of good courage, And He shall strengthen your heart; Wait, I say, on the LORD!

- In closing, I would like to share with you the ABC's of Salvation and in so doing provide you with several scripture references.

A is for Admit you're a sinner – Romans 3:23 says that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. The B is for Believe. Romans 10:9-10 says if you believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, you will be saved. The C is for Call. Romans 10:9-10 also says if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. Romans 10:13 says that all who call upon the name of the Lord will be saved.